

Customer No. 30973

DETAILED REMARKS

This Application was filed on December 21, 2001, with original claims 1-20. In March 2003, Applicants received an "Office communication" cover sheet (form PTO-90C), which indicated a mailing date of March 13, 2003, but which was not accompanied by any other document or information.

After notifying the Patent Office of the missing document, Applicants received by fax on or about March 25, 2003, a copy of the Office Action itself. At some later time, Applicants realized that a page of the Detailed Action was missing from the March 25 fax. After making a further request, on or about May 9, 2003, Applicants were provided with (what is believed to be) the entire Office Action.

Unfortunately, at that time Applicants also realized that although all of the pending claims had been rejected, neither a copy of the relied-upon reference ("Spenser et al") nor a U.S. patent number had been provided. The same was true for five other references "made of record" but not relied on.

At this time the undersigned attempted unsuccessfully to call Examiner Marianne Huseman, and then called Supervisory Examiner James Trammell to obtain more information regarding the references cited (but not enumerated). Examiner Trammell returned the call and indicated that Examiner Huseman had died, and that the Application was being reassigned.

Applicants and their attorneys wish to express their sincere condolences on the passing of Examiner Huseman.

After receiving this information, the undersigned spoke with Examiner Backer, who related that he would retrieve the file and respond with whatever additional information was appropriate. Thus far, Applicants have received no further communication in this Application. Although a response is expected in due course

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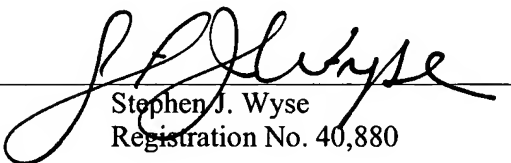
when Examiner Backer has had an opportunity to obtain and review the file, Applicants have noted that today is the three-month deadline for responding to the initial Office Action.

In view of the above, Applicants respond to the Office Action by requesting that a new Office Action be issued, including numbers for, and preferably copies of, the references cited therein, and that Applicants be given a full reply period in which to respond. Applicants also respectfully request that the Examiner review the first Office Action prepared by Examiner Huseman to confirm that it accurately reflects their view of the present Application and the cited art as well. In this way, Applicants will be able to provide a meaningful response and make any necessary amendments to the claims or other parts of the Application. Of course, Applicants request that the pending claims be allowed should any or all of them appear upon further review to be in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned with any comments, questions, or instructions.

Respectfully submitted,

Scheef & Stone, L.L.P.

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